



MASSACHUSETTS OFFICE FOR VICTIM ASSISTANCE

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SARALIZ MALDONADO OF WHEELOCK COLLEGE RECEIVES VICTIM SERVICES “FUTURE LEADERS AWARD” AT STATE HOUSE

BOSTON – During Victim Rights Month in April, Attorney General Maura Healey and the Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance (MOVA) recognize individuals and agencies that have made significant contributions to victim rights and services.

The Future Leaders Award was created to recognize students who have demonstrated exceptional leadership in raising awareness of crime or victim related issues in their community.

Ms. Sara Maldonado, a student at Wheelock College, received this year’s award for her work with the Now you See exhibit to raise public awareness of child sexual abuse in Massachusetts.

Now You See, started by Jackie Lamont, a forensic interviewer in the Suffolk District Attorney’s Office, is a collection of photographs of young survivors’ eyes with their stories and messages of resilience – letting other survivors know they are not alone and that help is available. Now You See has been displayed in courts, Child Advocacy Centers (CAC), Massachusetts State House, and other public venues throughout the state.

At the age of 15, Sara was the first survivor to be photographed and share her story in the exhibit. She now serves as a “survivor leader” with the program to help other survivors who participate. Sara attends and presents at every Now You See Bravery Celebration which honors new sexual assault survivors and participates in their varying awareness events.

Sara also participates in other awareness events in the greater Boston area, recently presenting to policymakers at the State House on the importance of CAC services and the Suffolk CAC’s Ginormous Climb to raise money for families impacted by sexual abuse.

“Sara’s journey has been a remarkable one. She survived traumatic childhood abuse, withstood the challenges of the criminal justice system, and has become a voice for all people affected by abuse and violence”, said Jackie Lamont of the Suffolk DA’s Office. “She is a true role model who has shown how much impact one voice can have on a community and has already made a significant difference in this world. She inspires me every day.”

“During Victim Rights Month we have an opportunity to recognize those who help some of the most vulnerable and innocent among us. These individuals provide critical services to victims, and we are proud of the work they do in our communities,” said Attorney General Maura Healey.

“Sara’s courage to share her story of sexual assault and support other survivors in their recovery is truly inspirational,” said Liam Lowney, MOVA’s Executive Director. “In addition to being a full time student, Sara raises awareness of sexual abuse to ensure everyone understands the impact supportive services can have in a survivor’s recovery. Sara exemplifies resiliency and her leadership will continue to impact survivors of sexual violence.”

To learn more about Victim Rights Month or this year’s recipients, please visit www.mass.gov/MOVA or call (617) 586-1354.

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